

Organization and chromosomal localization of the gene for the human bombesin receptor subtype expressed in pregnant uterus

Valentin Gorbulev^a, Aida Akhundova^a, K.-H. Grzeschik^b, Falk Fahrenholz^{a,*}

^aMax Planck Institut für Biophysik, Kennedy Allee 70, 60596 Frankfurt, Germany

^bMedizinisches Zentrum für Humangenetik, Bahnhofstraße 7a, 35037 Marburg, Germany

Received 31 January 1994

Abstract

The gene encoding the human homologue of the guinea pig uterine bombesin receptor [(1992) Eur. J. Biochem. 208, 405] was isolated from a genomic lambda library by the PCR/homology screening approach. The gene spans more than 4 kb and consists of 3 exons and 2 introns. The deduced amino acid sequence shows about 86% identity to that of guinea pig bombesin receptor. This subtype of bombesin receptor is expressed in the pregnant uterus and in two human tumour cell lines, T47D (ductal breast carcinoma) and A431 (epidermal carcinoma). PCR analysis of genomic DNA from human-mouse cell hybrids allows the cloned gene to be localized to the region q26–q28 on chromosome X.

Key words: Bombesin; Bombesin receptor; Chromosomal localization

1. Introduction

Bombesin isolated from frog skin in 1971 [1] gave the name to the large family of related regulatory peptides discovered later. More than 20 peptides of this family can be classified into three subfamilies according to their C-terminal tripeptide: bombesin, ranatensin/litorin and phyllolitorin subfamilies [2]. To date, only three bombesin-like peptides – gastrin-releasing peptide (GRP), its C-terminal decapeptide neuromedin C, and neuromedin B – were identified in mammals. The first two represent the bombesin subfamily, neuromedin B belongs to the ranatensin/litorin subfamily. No mammalian member of the phyllolitorin subfamily has been yet found.

Bombesin-like peptides demonstrate a wide spectrum of biological activities in mammals, such as secretion of gut hormones, the regulation of smooth-muscle contraction, the regulation of homeostasis and thermoregulation. They are involved in cell proliferation and act as autocrine growth factors for small-cell lung carcinoma [3].

Bombesin-like peptides exert their effects via receptors, that can be distinguished based on binding studies as GRP-preferring and neuromedin-B-preferring receptors [4]. Both types of human and rodent receptors have been cloned and characterized [5–7]. Recently we have

cloned a new bombesin receptor subtype from guinea pig that is expressed in uterus during pregnancy [8]. The similarity between this receptor and the two other cloned rodent bombesin receptors, the GRP receptor and the neuromedin B receptor, is 52% and 47%, respectively, i.e. lies in the range usually observed for receptor subtypes within the same family. The new receptor subtype binds GRP better than neuromedin B, but the low affinity of the binding ($IC_{50} = 300$ nM) does not allow to attribute this receptor to the GRP-subtype.

In this paper we report the identification of the gene for a human homologue of this receptor, its molecular organization and chromosomal localization.

2. Materials and methods

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) was carried out using human genomic DNA and degenerate oligonucleotides based on the bombesin receptor sequence from guinea pig. The PCR conditions were following: 30 cycles 94°C, 1 min; 50°C, 1.5 min; 72°C, 3 min. PCR products were resolved on agarose gel, transferred to Hybond-N and hybridized to the ³²P-labelled 1.5-kb *EcoRI*–*PstI* fragment of PU61 clone [8]. Amplified DNA was cloned into pGEM-7Zf(+) (Promega) and partially sequenced. The DNA insert of the clone with high homology to the bombesin receptor from guinea pig was used to screen a human placenta genomic library (Stratagene, Heidelberg). Phage DNA from one positive clone, HSUBR, was isolated and subjected to restriction analysis. DNA subfragments were isolated, recloned into pGEM-7Zf(+) or into pUC19 and sequenced on both strands by the dideoxynucleotide chain-termination method using a Sequenase version 2.0 kit (United States Biochemicals) and utilizing universal and internal oligonucleotide primers.

Most techniques, including Southern blotting, screening of phage library, plasmid and phage DNA isolation, recloning, were done by standard protocols [9].

*Corresponding author. Fax: (49) (69) 6303 244.

The novel nucleotide sequence data presented here have been deposited in the EMBL sequence data bank under Accession No. X76498

Human myometrium (3 probes at term, two from non-pregnant uterus) was obtained from surgical specimen with informed consent of the patients. For reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) total RNA was isolated from frozen tissues or cells by the acid-guanidinium-isothiocyanate/phenol-chloroform method [10] and mRNA was prepared using the PolyATtract mRNA Isolation system (Promega). Single-stranded cDNA was synthesized with Superscript reverse transcriptase (Gibco BRL), the template RNA was hydrolysed with NaOH and the cDNA was subjected to 30 cycles PCR (94°C, 1 min; 44°C, 2 min; 72°C, 3 min) with primers HBR 3 (5'-ACTCAC-TACCTTGCAGAA-3') and HBR 4 (5'-TACATAGGTTTGAG-AAGT-3') in the presence of 5% DMSO. The PCR product was analysed by Southern blot hybridization with the ³²P-labelled 380-bp *Xba*I–*Sca*I fragment of HSUBR (exon 2). The PCR product was cloned into pGEM-T (Promega) and partially sequenced.

For chromosomal localization of the human bombesin gene, 200 ng DNA from various somatic cell hybrids was subjected to PCR (30 cycles 94°C, 1 min; 53°C, 1.5 min; 72°C, 3 min) with the primers HBR 1 (5'-CTGGGAGCATACAGATGTC-3') and HBR 2 (5'-CCATTGACTTCCCTTACG-3'). The experiments were done first on 14 human–rodent somatic cell hybrids and then on cells, carrying different parts of the human X chromosome. The origin of the cell hybrids used in this study and their chromosome content have been described previously [11,12].

3. Results and discussion

Because our first experiments showed that it would be difficult to find a human tissue expressing this new subtype of bombesin receptor, we decided to clone the genomic gene from a human genomic library. Southern blot analysis of guinea pig genomic DNA revealed that this bombesin receptor subtype like two others [7] contains introns (data not shown). We designed degenerate oligonucleotides for PCR based on the bombesin receptor cDNA sequence, taking into account that the amino acid sequence of the receptor in the position of the primers should be most divergent within the bombesin receptor subfamily and at the same time enough conserved to be present in human species. One pair of oligonucleotides 5'-GGAT^A/_CATGTC^C/_TATGAT^A/_CTT^T/_CGC-3' and 5'-GT^G/_CAC^G/_AATGAAA^A/_GTGGATGGC-3' (transmembrane domains 4 and 7, respectively) gave after PCR on human genomic DNA a product that hybridized to a guinea pig bombesin receptor cDNA fragment. This PCR product (2.3 kb) was gel-purified and cloned into pGEM-7Zf(+). By partial sequencing a clone was identified that contained a coding region for a bombesin receptor similar to the guinea pig receptor but different from two other cloned human bombesin receptors. The two parts of the receptor coding region were separated by a large intron. Using the cloned PCR product as a ³²P-probe we screened 500,000 recombinant phage from a human placenta genomic library. One positive clone, HSUBR, was identified, its DNA was isolated and subjected to restriction analysis. The fragments of the large insert were recloned then into pGEM-7Zf(+) or pUC19 and sequenced on both strands (Fig. 1).

The comparison of the cloned human bombesin receptor with other bombesin receptors allowed to localize the start and end of the coding region and to suggest the

position of exon–intron boundaries. The last could be proved only by cDNA analysis. For this purpose we applied RT-PCR approach with two HSUBR-specific oligonucleotides designed to the sequences within exons 1 and 3 (see Section 2). Using RT-PCR and Southern blotting of PCR products we observed the fragment of expected size (591 bp) in human pregnant myometrium as well as in two human cell lines, T47D (ductal breast carcinoma) and A431 (epidermal carcinoma) (Fig. 2). The cloning and partial sequencing of the PCR product confirmed that these cell lines and human pregnant myometrium do express bombesin receptor. The sequence data showed the exact position of introns in the bombesin receptor gene. Intron 1 interrupts the codon for Arg¹⁴⁵, intron 2 is located between codons for Gln²⁶² and Ile²⁶³. These positions coincide with that in the two other bombesin receptor subtypes [7]. Every intron has a size of about 1.5 kb and the exon–intron boundaries fit well to the consensus splicing signal [13].

The comparison of the predicted amino acid sequence of HSUBR with that of the guinea pig bombesin receptor (Fig. 3) shows 86% overall identity. Even N-terminal regions of these receptors have 89% identity. The most divergent parts are their C-terminal regions. Nevertheless, all potential phosphorylation sites present in the guinea pig bombesin receptor are conserved in the human homologue too.

Due to the low level of bombesin receptor expression in the tested cell lines and tissues we could not determine the transcription initiation site in this gene. We have sequenced more than 1 kb upstream from the first ATG codon in the coding region (Fig. 1) and tried to localize the promoter elements using computer analysis by the PC-gene program EUKPROM. Several TATA-boxes were identified, but none of them contained a paired CAAT-box element and a cap signal. Some other G-protein-coupled receptors also lack TATA-box sequences or paired TATA/CAAT elements in their promoter region [14,15]. But all these receptors have a high G + C content upstream from the translation initiation site and this feature resembles the promoters of 'house-keeping genes' [16]. In our case, however, the 5' flanking sequence of HSUBR is rather A/T rich, there are no remarkable SP₁-binding motifs [17], thus it is still unclear, how and where the HSUBR gene transcription is initiated.

The Southern blot analysis of human genomic DNA indicated that there is only one copy of this gene in the genome (data not shown). To localize the receptor gene on a chromosome we carried out the PCR analysis on chromosomal DNA from 14 human–rodent somatic cell hybrids [11] using two HSUBR-specific primers (see Section 2). The primers were designed to the C-terminal part of the receptor and to the 3' non-coding region, to regions where there is the highest difference between HSUBR and two other human bombesin receptor genes

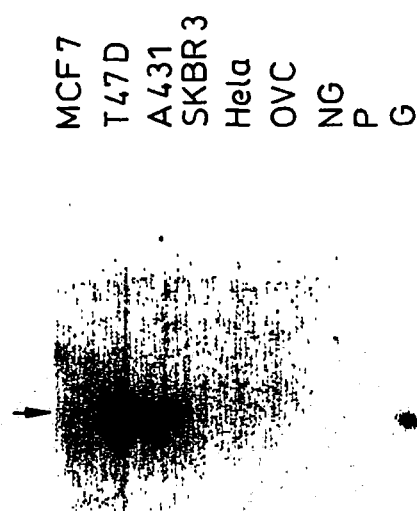


Fig. 2. Analysis of bombesin receptor mRNA expression. RT-PCR products were analysed by Southern blotting (see Section 2). mRNA was prepared from mammary carcinoma cell lines (MCF7, T47D, SKBR3), epidermal carcinoma (A431), ovary carcinoma OVCA3 (OVC), HeLa, from pregnant myometrium (G), non-pregnant myometrium (NG) and placenta (P). Arrow indicates the expected 591-bp fragment.

tained only part of this chromosome (Fig. 4). In these clones the smallest region of overlap (SRO) for the segregation of the human specific PCR fragment was the region Xq26–28. These data indicate that the bombesin receptor gene HSUBR is located in a well studied region of the human X chromosome hosting among other genes the γ -aminobutyric acid A receptor α 3 (GABRA 3), the arginine vasopressin V_2 receptor (AVPR2), a gene for spastic paraplegia 1 (SPG1), for myotubular myopathy

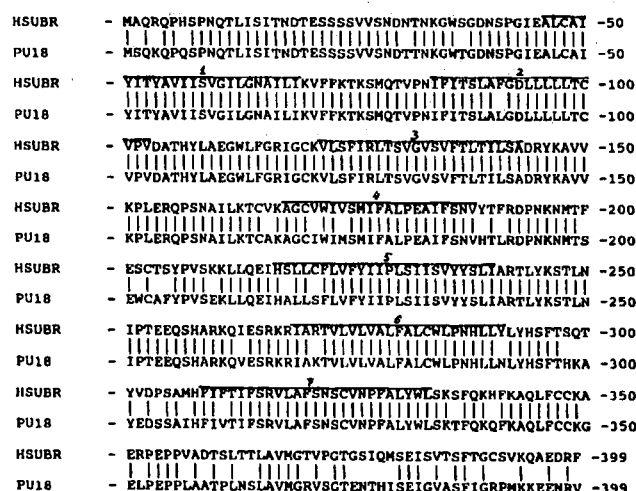


Fig. 3. Amino acid sequence alignment of guinea pig uterine bombesin receptor (PU18) and HSUBR. Identical residues are shown by vertical lines. Putative transmembrane domains are overlined.

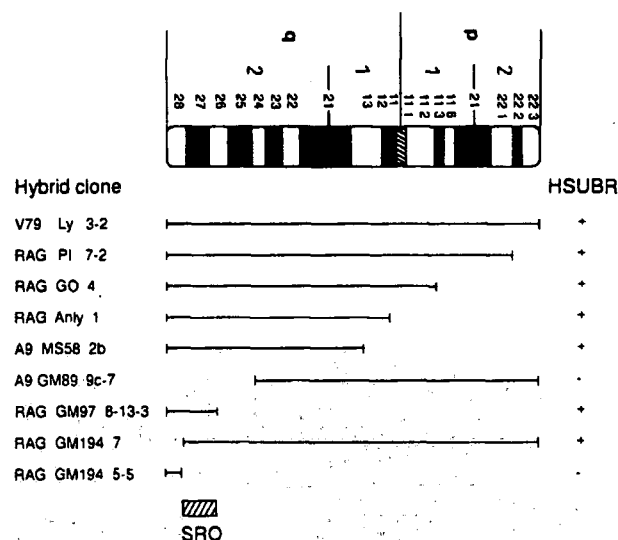


Fig. 4. PCR analysis of DNA from human-mouse somatic cell hybrids containing different fragments of the human X chromosome. The lines indicate which part of the X chromosome is retained in the individual clones used for PCR with primers HBR1 and HBR2. Presence or absence of the HSUBR-specific PCR product is indicated by + or -. SRO, the smallest region of overlap.

1 (MTM1), for Emery-Dreifuss muscular dystrophy (EMD) and for Pettigrew syndrome [18].

In conclusion, we have cloned the gene for the human homologue of the guinea pig uterine bombesin receptor, determined its genomic organisation and localized this gene on the long arm of the human X chromosome.

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank Dr. M.W. Beckman and Dr. D. Niederacher, (Molekularbiologisches Labor Universitätsfrauenklinik Düsseldorf) and Dr. Dr. M. Kirchbaum (Zentrum für Frauenheilkunde und Geburtshilfe, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen) for providing the cell lines and tissues for mRNA expression experiments. This work was supported by a grant from SFB 169.

References

- [1] Anastasi, A., Ersparmer, V. and Bucci, M. (1971) *Experientia* 27, 166–167.
- [2] Ersparmer, V. (1988) *Ann. NY Acad. Sci.* 547, 3–9.
- [3] Lebacqz-Verheyden, A.M., Trepel, J., Sansville, E.A. and Battey, J.F. (1990) in *Handbook of Experimental Pharmacology: Peptide Hormone Factors and Their Receptors II* (Sporn, M.N. and Roberts, A.B., Eds.) Vol. 95, pp. 71–124, Springer Verlag, Berlin.
- [4] von Schrenck, T., Wang, L.-H., Coy, D.H., Villanueva, M.L., Mantey, S. and Jensen, R.T. (1990) *Am. J. Physiol.* 259, G468–G473.
- [5] Spindel, E.R., Giladi, E., Brehm, T.P., Goodman, R.M. and Segerson, T.P. (1990) *Mol. Endocrinol.* 43, 1950–1963.
- [6] Wada, E., Way, J., Shapira, H., Kusano, K., Lebacqz-Verheyden, A.M., Coy, D., Jensen, R. and Battey, J. (1991) *Neuron* 6, 421–430.
- [7] Coriay, M.K., Dobrzanski, D.J., Way, J.M., Viallett, J., Shapira, H., Worland, P., Sansville, E.A. and Battey, J.F. (1991) *J. Biol. Chem.* 266, 18771–18779.

- [8] Gorbulev, V., Akhundova, A., Büchner, H. and Fahrenholz, F. (1992) *Eur. J. Biochem.* 208, 405–410.
- [9] Sambrook, J., Fritsch, E.F. and Maniatis, T. (1989) *Molecular Cloning*, Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Press.
- [10] Chomczynski, P. and Sacchi, N. (1987) *Anal. Biochem.* 162, 1556–1559.
- [11] Luerssen, H., Mattei, M.-G., Schröter, M., Grzeschik, K.-H., Adham, I.M. and Engel, W. (1990) *Genomics* 8, 324–330.
- [12] Boyle, J.M., Hey, Y., Myers, H., Stern, P.L., Grzeschik, K.-H., Ikehara, Y., Misumi, Y. and Fox, M. (1992) *Genomics* 12, 693–698.
- [13] Breathnach, R. and Chambon, P. (1981) *Annu. Rev. Biochem.* 50, 349–383.
- [14] Kobilka, B.K., Frielle, T., Dohlman, H.G., Bolanowski, M.A., Dixon, R.A.F., Keller, P., Caron, M.G. and Lefkowitz, R.J. (1987) *J. Biol. Chem.* 262, 7321–7327.
- [15] Collins, S., Ostrowski, J. and Lefkowitz, R.J. (1993) *Biochim. Biophys. Acta*, 1172, 171–174.
- [16] Melton, D.W., McEwan, C., McKie, D. and Reid, A.M. (1986) *Cell* 44, 319–328.
- [17] Kadonaga, J.Z., Jones, K.A. and Tijan, R. (1986) *Trends Biochem.* 11, 20–23.
- [18] Mandel, D.W., Monaco, A.P., Nelson, D., Schlessinger, D. and Willard, H.F. (1993) *Genome Priority Reports* 1, 588–640.